

a high enough suspicion based on the evidence available of a harm that causes a severe enough illness, then we need to act on that suspicion.

We can't afford to wait decades, like we did with Agent Orange, for that perfect study to establish a perfect causality between burn pit exposure and cancers and pulmonary conditions our veterans are developing and dying from right now. There is enough evidence to act.

We must act for veterans like Alejandro and help him get the healthcare and benefits he earned when we sent him to war for our country. Alejandro is now cancer free, but the fight continues to get him the benefits he deserves.

We are making real bipartisan progress on this front, with legislation like the Honoring our PACT Act, which takes an aggressive and comprehensive approach to the urgent healthcare crisis that veterans like Alejandro are facing.

This legislation will keep our Nation's promise to our veterans that we will take care of them after they serve our Nation. It contains my bill, the Presumptive Benefits for War Fighters Exposed to Burn Pits and Other Toxins Act. It creates a presumption of service-related illnesses due to burn pits in order to take care of our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I urge this body to take up this bill to support Alejandro and the rest of our heroes in uniform.

INFLATION CRUSHING HOLIDAY BUDGETS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MEUSER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MEUSER. Mr. Speaker, Americans are feeling the pinch of rising prices as they are gearing up to both host and visit their families and friends this holiday season.

Thanksgiving is just around the corner, and it is shaping up to be the most expensive meal in the history of the holiday due to rising costs, largely from President Biden and Democrats' failed economic policies.

Inflation is at a 30-year high, crushing American holiday budgets from the cost of travel, food, and gifts. The price of gasoline, Mr. Speaker, is up 61 percent—nearly \$4 nationally—from a year ago, causing the price of driving and flying to see relatives skyrocket. Many Americans are now facing the decision to cancel holiday travel due to these rising costs.

Most holiday staple foods are significantly more expensive as well, if Americans are lucky enough to find them on the grocery shelves due to the supply chain crisis we are facing.

The cost of turkey is up about 20 percent. Potatoes are up about 15 percent. Carrots are up almost 50 percent. Cranberries and biscuits are up nearly 10 percent. And even pumpkin pie is way up.

On average, a Thanksgiving meal this year will cost families between 15 to 20 percent more than it did just 1 year ago today. With the rising cost of energy and essential goods, nearly one-third of working families' earnings are going to food and energy costs.

Instead of finding ways to offset this, mitigate it, improve and fix the supply chain crisis, and bring domestic energy back to minimize these skyrocketing energy costs, President Biden and my colleagues in the Democratic Caucus in this House continue to push for a historically large multitrillion-dollar spending bill called Build Back Better that will raise taxes and seriously damage domestic energy production, which I completely don't understand, nor does anyone in my district.

As well, it has special interest tax cuts, and it will not cost zero. Can we please stop insulting the people? It will cost trillions, all the while suppressing our economy and opportunity.

When you are in a hole, Mr. Speaker, you don't keep digging, but our Democrat friends continue to push for far-left policies that will further drive inflation by creating excess demand with no building of supply, which hurts low-income and middle-class families the hardest.

Now is the time for Congress to pass pro-growth, free market legislation that will actually empower our economy and put more money into the pockets of the American taxpayer, not in the coffers of Washington.

Mr. Speaker, the solutions are actually kind of simple. We must follow our rule book, which is known as the Constitution. We must respect and abide by our oath to the Constitution, not with some crazy mandates coming out of Washington. We must strengthen our national security, including securing our borders.

We must strengthen our economy, not grow our government. No one in my district is saying, hey, the Federal Government is not big enough. Let's expand it by 30 percent.

We must continue to focus on making America the land of opportunity, the land of independence, not the land of dependence. That is not what we wrote way back when. This is done through education and through driving career opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, we, as well, need to have an understanding that it is our job to be the adults in the room and be fiscally responsible with the taxpayers' money. It is not our money; it is the taxpayers' money.

So the American people deserve better. They deserve better from this House. We need to deliver. Truly, the idea of America depends upon it.

□ 1030

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS IN THE STATE OF TEXAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GARCIA) for 5 minutes.

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the critical investments coming to my home State of Texas.

This week, the President signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. This bipartisan bill is bringing over \$35 billion to Texas for important projects that will rebuild our communities. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that this is long overdue.

When I was a Harris County commissioner, I built a few roads. I saw firsthand how badly our roads and bridges had deteriorated. We regularly scored Cs and Ds on infrastructure that my precinct relied on every day, creating extra costs and putting lives in danger. In fact, roads in terrible condition have forced Texas drivers to pay over \$700 in extra costs each year. Since 2011, Texans have seen their commute increase to about half an hour because our roads haven't kept up with our growth.

In that same time, Texans were hit with 60 extreme weather events that cost taxpayers over \$200 billion. More than that, crumbling infrastructure has taken the lives of thousands in our great State. Just this February our electric grid nearly collapsed, and over 200 people—many of them seniors—froze to death in their homes.

We are past due in the work to improve our State's infrastructure. That is why I am proud to have voted for this jobs bill and for all of the investments coming to Texas.

The bill that we passed is over \$3.5 billion to weatherize our grid and prepare it for future crises. We also invest \$27 billion in our State's highways and bridges. We will also get \$3 billion to bring safe, clean water to every Texan, especially in our rural communities. This is not small potatoes.

We know how dangerous lead pipes are for growing children. Lead contamination can cause developmental problems, mental health issues, and serious medical emergencies. Because of this funding, we can remove lead pipes from Texas schools and ensure that every child can drink clean, safe water.

Thanks to all of these investments, Texans will have safer commutes, cleaner water, and lower bills for reliable electricity.

But this law does not solve just today's problems. It prepares us for tomorrow's opportunities. Thanks to this law, Texas will receive nearly half a billion dollars to expand the electric vehicle charging network. We will also receive over \$1 billion to improve our State's airports which are some of the Nation's busiest. We can also expect over \$100 million to bring internet access to 1 million Texans who currently lack it. This is especially important to rural Texans like my sister who has to drive all the way into town to get to the library to access the internet.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to solve these problems and create jobs for our community. That is what this law is going to do. The bill will create thousands of jobs in my State from construction